

Chapter 1.3.2 – Certification Procedures

Article 1.3.2.1

Current Proposed language:

Protection of the professional integrity of the certifying veterinarian or other certifying officials

Certification should be based on the highest possible ethical standards, the most important of which is that the professional integrity of the *certifying official* or other certifying veterinarian must be respected and safeguarded.

It is essential not to include in the requirements additional specific matters that cannot be accurately and honestly signed by a *certifying official* or other veterinarian. For example, these requirements should not include certification of an area as being free from [non-notifiable] *diseases that are not notifiable in that country*, the occurrence of which the signing *certifying official* or other veterinarian is not necessarily informed about. Equally, to [require] ask for certification for events that will take place after the document is signed is unacceptable when these events are not under the direct control and supervision of the signing certifying official or other veterinarian.

Certification of freedom from *diseases* based on purely clinical freedom and aquatic animal population history [may be] is of limited value. This is also true of *diseases* for which there is no specific diagnostic test, or the value of the test as a diagnostic aid is limited.

The purpose of the note of guidance referred to in [paragraph 2 above] Article 1.3.1.1, is not only to inform the signing *certifying official* or other veterinarian but also to safeguard [his/her] professional integrity.

Suggested language

Protection of the professional integrity of the [certifying veterinarian or other] certifying officials

Certification should be based on the highest possible ethical standards, the most important of which is that the professional integrity of the *certifying official* [or other certifying veterinarian] must be respected and safeguarded.

It is essential not to include in the requirements additional specific matters that cannot be accurately and honestly signed by a *certifying official* [or other veterinarian]. For example, these requirements should not include certification of an area as being free from [non-notifiable] *diseases that are not notifiable in that country*, the occurrence of which the signing *certifying official* [or other veterinarian] is not necessarily informed about. Equally, to [require] ask for certification for events that will take place after the document is signed is unacceptable when these events are not under the direct control and supervision of the signing certifying official [or other veterinarian].

Certification of freedom from *diseases* based on purely clinical freedom and aquatic animal population history [may be] is of limited value. This is also true of *diseases* for which there is no specific diagnostic test, or the value of the test as a diagnostic aid is limited.

The purpose of the note of guidance referred to in [paragraph 2 above] Article 1.3.1.1. is not only to inform the signing *certifying official* [or other veterinarian] but also to safeguard [his/her] professional integrity.

Rationale for suggested change: the definition of *certifying official* in the OIE Code is all inclusive of any professional (including veterinarians) recognized by the *Competent Authority* of the Member Country. Therefore, it is quite redundant and unnecessary to add the additional phrase “other certifying veterinarian”. Furthermore, by using the words “other certifying veterinarian”, it is inferred that the *certifying official* must also be a veterinarian. Clearly, there are aquatic animal health officials in the United States, Canada, and other countries recognized by the respective *Competent Authorities* as “*certifying officials*”, yet, these recognized officials are not veterinarians. The rest of the Chapter is consistent with this position.